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BRENDAN HUGHES REVELATIONS

ADAMS "ORDERED JEAN McCONVILLE'S MURDER"

By Allison Morris

THE 1972 abduction and murder of Jean McConville – one of the Disappeared – has long endured as a symbol of the ruthlessness of IRA 'justice'.

Divis Flats, where she lived, was a sprawling complex of box-style high-rise homes where hundreds of families were united by poverty, poor living conditions and the violence that had dominated west Belfast.

For decades the IRA denied that it had murdered and secretly buried the widowed mother-of-10 but it finally admitted responsibility in a list of Disappeared handed over to the British and Irish governments in 1999.

IRA veteran Dolours Price recently told *The Irish News* that

"There was only one man who gave the order for that woman to be executed. That man is now the head of Sinn Féin"

Brendan Hughes

she had been a member of Gerry Adams's hand-picked elite unit of IRA men and women trusted with details of the controversial 'operations'. In interviews given a few years before his death Brendan Hughes calls this unit the 'unknowns'.

Mrs McConville's family have always maintained that she was killed for having gone to the aid of an injured soldier. They have always denied that she was an informer.

However, Hughes repeats that allegation and adds that

Mrs McConville (37) had been given a warning for passing information to the British before she was caught a second time and murdered.

Hughes says he was aware that Mrs McConville was due to be killed but denies having been present when the decision to bury her body in a secret location was taken.

He says one-time IRA leader Ivor Bell argued for a public execution as a warning to others but that Mr Adams felt that the clandestine burial would be better because she was a woman.

"I sent a squad over to the house to check it out and there was a transmitter in the house," Hughes said.

"We retrieved the transmitter, arrested her, took her away, interrogated her and she told us what she was doing."

"We actually knew what she was doing because we had the transmitter."

"Because she was a woman we let her go with a warning and confiscated the transmitter."

"A few weeks later another transmitter was put into her house. She was still cooperating with the British; she was getting paid by the British to pass on information."

"The special squad was brought into operation then and she was arrested [by the IRA] again and taken away."

"I knew she was being executed. I didn't know she was going to be buried or 'disappeared' as they call it now."

"I know one particular person on the Belfast Brigade at the time, Ivor Bell, argued for her to be shot, yes, but to be left on the street."

"There was only one man who gave the order for that woman to be executed."

"That man is now the head of Sinn Féin."

Hughes says Seamus Wright and Kevin McKee, who were also abducted, murdered and secretly buried by the Provisionals in 1972, were disappeared because they came from republican families and the IRA did not want to "bring shame" on their relatives.

He says he told their relatives that they had been killed years before the IRA admitted involvement.